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Missouri's Unemployment Rate Held Firm in April, Employment Rebounded

Missouri employment rebounded in April following three flat months, while the state's unadjusted unemployment rate edged down slightly to 4.9 percent compared to 5.0 percent in March and 5.4 percent in April 2002. The state's unemployment rate is nearly a full percent below the national unemployment rate of 5.8 percent.

At the same time, the state's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate edged up slightly to 5.0 percent. So far this year, the unemployment rate has averaged 4.9 percent, well below last year's 5.5 percent average.

Non-farm payroll employment climbed by 10,000 jobs, on a seasonally adjusted basis, to 2,645,300 in April. Employment had ranged from 2,635,300 to 2,638,100 in the first three months of the year.

In another positive development, the labor force increased by 12,500 in April, on a seasonally adjusted basis, representing the largest gain since October 2000. The size of the labor force, which reflects the total number of persons who are employed and unemployed, has been trending downward since mid-2001.

"We are pleased to see that our unemployment rate is continuing well below the national rate and that we are seeing an increase in the size of our labor force," said Joseph L. Driskill, director of the Department of Economic Development. "The positive signs that we have seen throughout this year are indications that Missouri's economy is improving."

April's improvement in payroll employment was concentrated in various service-providing sectors. Gains included 4,400 jobs in leisure and hospitality; 4,200 jobs in professional and business services; 2,300 jobs in educational and health services; and 4,700 jobs in other services. However, employment decreased by 1,000 to 2,000 in each of three super sectors -- manufacturing; construction; and trade, transportation and utilities. Other sectors experienced little change.

On a not-seasonally-adjusted basis, employment increased by 28,300 jobs in April. This is a month that usually reflects substantial seasonal improvement, but this year's was well beyond that usual gain. Leisure and hospitality industries grew by 13,200 jobs. Food services employment was up by 8,700 jobs; amusement, gambling, and recreation by 2,400; and other industries by 2,100.

Professional and business services employment growth was concentrated in administrative and support services with 2,800, and management of companies with 1,400 jobs. Private educational services increased by 1,700 jobs; health services by 1,700; and social assistance by 1,900. Religious, grant-making, civic and professional organizations grew by 2,700. Local government employment, including public schools, was up by 1,000 jobs, while other government employment was little changed. Construction employment grew by 1,900 jobs, but this was apparently less than the seasonally expected gain. General merchandise stores were down by 1,700.

The over-the-year employment decrease was considerably smaller in April than it has been in the past few months: 43,900 seasonally adjusted or 44,600 not seasonally adjusted. Over-the-year growth has been concentrated in educational and health services with 4,100 jobs (unadjusted) and in the growth of "other services" with 5,700 jobs, mostly in religious, grant-making, civic and professional organizations. Decreases were concentrated in manufacturing (-13,700), construction (-3,700), telecommunications (-3,700), administrative and support services (-5,700), air transportation (-1,700), and state government (-13,300).

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MISSOURI UNEMPLOYMENT RATES
FOR METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREAS (MSAs), LABOR MARKET AREAS (LMAs), AND COUNTIES
CURRENT MONTH (APRIL 2003), PREVIOUS TWO MONTHS (FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2003), AND YEAR AGO (APRIL 2002)

	APR 2003	MAR 2003	FEB 2003	APR 2002		APR 2003	MAR 2003	FEB 2003	APR 2002
U.S. (not seasonally adjusted)	5.8	6.2	6.4	5.7	Atchison	2.7	2.7	3.4	2.8
MISSOURI	4.9	5.0	5.2	5.4	Audrain	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4
ST. LOUIS MSA	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.6	Barton	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.6
Franklin	5.1	5.6	6.0	5.8	Bates	6.3	6.8	6.8	6.7
Jefferson	5.0	5.4	5.5	5.7	Benton	6.9	7.4	8.4	7.5
Lincoln	5.5	6.1	6.3	5.8	Caldwell	6.8	7.3	8.0	7.7
St. Charles	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	Carroll	5.0	5.7	5.5	5.3
St. Louis County	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.7	Cedar	5.5	6.7	6.6	5.6
Warren	5.2	6.1	6.5	5.8	Chariton	4.9	5.6	5.9	5.8
St. Louis City	8.5	8.0	7.7	9.5	Clark	6.7	7.5	8.0	8.4
KANSAS CITY MSA	5.4	5.3	5.4	5.4	Cooper	3.1	3.8	3.9	3.7
Cass	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.2	Crawford	6.8	7.2	7.8	6.9
Clay	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0	Dade	3.9	3.9	4.1	5.0
Clinton	4.4	5.4	5.6	4.8	Dallas	6.0	5.9	6.0	7.0
Jackson	5.8	5.6	5.6	6.1	Daviess	5.6	5.7	6.0	6.1
Lafayette	4.8	4.9	4.6	5.6	DeKalb	4.9	6.1	5.8	5.8
Platte	3.4	3.5	3.5	4.0	Dent	6.3	6.9	7.4	6.5
Ray	5.1	5.5	5.0	5.2	Douglas	7.9	8.7	9.7	11.3
SPRINGFIELD MSA	3.4	3.5	3.8	4.4	Dunklin	7.6	7.9	8.1	7.6
Christian	3.9	4.5	5.2	4.5	Gasconade	5.5	5.7	5.7	5.6
Greene	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	Gentry	2.9	3.4	3.5	5.3
Webster	4.2	3.8	4.2	5.9	Grundy	5.4	5.8	5.0	5.4
JOPLIN MSA	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.8	Harrison	4.2	5.3	5.9	5.0
Jasper	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.8	Henry	7.6	7.5	7.5	6.1
Newton	5.5	5.2	5.1	4.9	Hickory	8.2	9.4	9.3	6.2
COLUMBIA MSA	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.2	Holt	5.1	5.2	6.0	4.4
Boone	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.2	Howard	3.5	4.3	4.1	4.7
ST. JOSEPH MSA	5.0	5.5	5.8	5.9	Iron	7.8	8.6	8.6	9.9
Andrew	3.9	4.8	5.1	5.1	Johnson	3.2	3.6	3.5	3.8
Buchanan	5.2	5.6	5.9	6.1	Knox	3.4	4.4	4.0	4.6
ADAIR-SCHUYLER LMA	3.4	4.3	3.8	3.7	Laclede	9.5	9.4	9.2	6.6
Adair	3.1	3.8	3.3	3.3	Lewis	4.6	5.0	5.2	4.2
Schuyler	5.3	7.4	6.9	5.6	Linn	6.0	7.1	7.6	4.7
BUTLER-CARTER-RIPLEY LMA	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.5	Livingston	4.2	4.6	4.6	3.9
Butler	4.6	5.1	5.2	5.0	McDonald	6.0	5.7	5.7	4.8
Carter	5.9	7.3	6.7	6.2	Macon	4.8	6.2	6.2	7.0
Ripley	6.3	5.9	6.2	7.1	Madison	7.2	8.3	8.1	10.1
CAMDEN-MILLER LMA	5.6	7.3	8.7	7.0	Mercer	7.0	7.9	7.1	4.9
Camden	5.6	7.2	8.5	6.5	Monroe	6.2	7.6	7.6	6.8
Miller	5.6	7.4	9.1	7.8	Montgomery	6.1	7.3	7.0	6.1
CAPE GIRARDEAU-SCOTT-NEW MADRID LMA	5.0	5.2	5.3	5.6	Morgan	6.1	7.6	8.6	7.7
Bollinger	6.5	6.6	7.1	7.7	Nodaway	1.7	2.2	2.2	1.7
Cape Girardeau	3.5	3.6	3.6	4.2	Ozark	5.3	5.9	6.8	6.4
Mississippi	6.2	6.3	7.2	7.9	Pemiscot	10.5	10.6	10.6	9.5
New Madrid	9.2	10.4	11.0	8.6	Perry	2.9	3.2	3.4	3.7
Scott	5.4	5.2	4.9	5.9	Pettis	4.9	5.1	5.6	6.2
COLE-CALLAWAY-MONITEAU LMA	3.0	3.2	3.4	3.5	Pike	4.7	5.1	5.4	5.8
Callaway	3.4	3.5	3.8	3.6	Polk	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.2
Cole	2.5	2.8	2.8	2.9	Pulaski	4.0	4.3	4.6	5.4
Moniteau	3.2	3.5	3.9	4.6	Putnam	7.7	8.3	7.8	4.8
Osage	4.4	4.3	4.4	5.0	Randolph	4.8	4.9	5.2	5.9
HOWELL-OREGON-SHANNON LMA	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3	Reynolds	9.2	10.2	10.8	8.6
Howell	5.1	4.7	4.8	5.2	St. Clair	7.0	7.6	7.0	6.4
Oregon	4.0	4.3	3.9	4.9	Ste. Genevieve	5.2	5.3	5.8	6.0
Shannon	6.4	7.9	9.1	6.1	Saline	4.5	4.9	5.1	6.2
LAWRENCE-BARRY LMA	4.6	4.8	5.2	5.0	Scotland	3.7	5.2	5.5	4.7
Barry	4.7	4.9	5.4	4.7	Shelby	5.0	6.6	6.7	6.3
Lawrence	4.5	4.7	5.0	5.3	Stoddard	5.7	5.9	6.6	6.3
MARION-RALLS LMA	5.1	5.7	5.7	5.1	Stone	9.1	13.6	19.9	9.8
Marion	4.9	5.4	5.4	5.1	Sullivan	10.9	11.4	11.8	3.9
Ralls	5.6	6.7	6.4	5.1	Taney	7.2	11.8	17.2	8.6
PHELPS-MARIES LMA	3.1	3.3	3.6	3.8	Texas	7.4	7.9	8.4	7.2
Maries	3.3	3.5	4.0	5.5	Vernon	4.3	4.7	4.5	5.6
Phelps	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.4	Wayne	10.2	10.9	11.9	12.3
ST. FRANCOIS-WASHINGTON LMA	7.1	7.7	7.9	8.4	Worth	4.1	3.3	4.2	5.8
St. Francois	6.5	6.8	6.9	7.7	Wright	6.5	7.1	6.7	9.3
Washington	8.7	9.9	10.4	10.3					

NOTE: DATA FOR COUNTIES WITHIN MSAs/LMAs ARE DISAGGREGATED FROM MSA/LMA TOTALS.

NOTE: SUBSTATE AREA DATA FOR 2002 HAVE BEEN REVISED BUT ARE PROVISIONAL: NOT YET OFFICIAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

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